

THE NEW AMERICAN CONCERTO

"What is America today? How can the field of classical music draw upon the cultural richness contained within our diverse country? How can we engage in a cultural dialogue that strengthens classical music through a multiplicity of experience? True representation of today's America on our stages has the potential to inspire and motivate the next generation of musicians and audiences. There is space in our world for all of us and for all of our stories.

THE NEW AMERICAN CONCERTO project seeks to engage with and reflect the diversity of America through the traditional form of the violin concerto. It seeks to represent America today. Each composer has been invited to draw upon their own personal experiences related to contemporary issues of today through the form of the violin concerto. The project is thus not only about broader cultural ideas, but also about exploring the unique power of this centuries-old form to speak to us in the 21st century." *Jennifer Koh*



"Jennifer Koh is a risk-taking, high-octane player of the kind who grabs the listener by the ears and refuses to let go....she supports her mesmerizing flights of fancy with a beguilingly silvery tone, fabulous technique and dead center intonation." *The Strad*

THE CONCERTI

VIJAY IYER (co-commissioned by the Ojai Music Festival, Cal Performances in Berkeley, and the Boston Symphony Orchestra) *Trouble* explores the issues of discrimination and the immigrant experience. Koh and Iyer have grappled with problematic attitudes towards race—exacerbated by the current political climate and high-profile injustices—and they wanted to find a way to tackle the difficult subject matter of racial violence through music. The work musically creates a journey that contains birth, realization, and gathering of a multitude of voices within the ensemble with the violin leading the call to assemble. *Trouble* contains an elegy for the Chinese-American man, Vincent Chin, who was beaten to death in Detroit in 1982 while being accused of stealing jobs for being Japanese. Koh was 5 years old and remembers this as one of the first Asian-American political movements in her life.

CHRIS CERRONE (commissioned by the Detroit Symphony Orchestra) His Violin Concerto explores the impact of technology in transforming the way we think and live our lives. Among Cerrone's inspirations for exploring this subject is the city of Detroit itself, situated in the Rust Belt region where workers in many industries have seen their jobs threatened by advances in technology. The concerto engages with the tension between automation and manual labor, as well as its human consequences. The music also reflects on how our patterns of thought are influenced by an increasingly "plugged-in" world, from 24/7 surveillance to unending streams of tweets and texts.

LISA BIELAWA (premiering in the 2019-2020 season) Based on "Sanctuary Songs" a work she wrote for Jennifer Koh for violin and piano, this piece will be composed for a chamber sized orchestras. The composer-vocalist takes inspiration for her work from literary sources and close artistic collaborations. Her music has been described as "fluid and arresting ... at once dramatic and probing," by the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

TYSHAWN SOREY (premiering in the 2020-2021 season) The multi-instrumentalist is celebrated for his incomparable virtuosity, effortless mastery and memorization of highly complex scores, and an extraordinary ability to blend composition and improvisation in his work. The Newark, NJ native will premiere his concerto with the New Jersey Symphony.

